
Literary Cabinet.

Si non tantus fructus perciperetur ex his studiis, quantum percipi constat, sed ex his delectatio sola peteretur; tamen hæc animi remissio judicanda esset libero homine dignissima. CICERO.

VOL. I.] YALE COLLEGE, SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1807. [No. 8.

CONDITIONS.

- I. THIS Paper will be under the direction of Editors, chosen from the Senior Class.
- II. It will be published once a fortnight, on a half sheet, in the octavo form.
- III. Its price will be *One Dollar* per annum—*Fifty Cents* to be paid in advance.
- IV. Persons not living in this city must pay the whole subscription *in advance*.

The Essayist.

No. VI.

THAT "the knowledge which we have of things past, by our memory, is as unaccountable as an immediate knowledge would be of things to come," cannot be reasonably acknowledged. If this is the case, why have logicians attempted to analyze the human mind, in order to discover, among its other qualities, that of memory? They have traced its steps from perception to memory. "This then" says a writer, "is the first capacity of the human mind, that it is fitted to receive the impressions made upon it by outward objects affecting the senses; which impressions, thus derived into the understanding, and *there lodged* for the view of the soul, employ it in various acts of perceiving, remembering, considering, &c. all of which are attended with an internal feeling and consciousness." I shall not pretend to account for the various workings of the mind, while proceeding from one step to another, nor

shall I attempt to show the tendency of these workings to produce the effect, of which we know them to be the cause; for to account for the most common occurrences of life, with this minuteness, would baffle the skill of the ablest philosophers. If we are asked what is the principle of combustion, we immediately declare it to be Oxygen; but *how* this tends to it, we are unable to determine.

1st. When objects are once presented to our view they form an image upon the retina of the mind, which image would soon be effaced by time, but reflection renews it, and makes it last forever. Hence we have one cause, viz. the first impression, for *memory*, while we have none for *pre-science*.

2d. If the preceding remarks do not satisfy the enquirer, that the retention of facts by the aid of *memory*, is strange, yet it will serve to show him that the remembrance of past events is by no means so singular as the

knowledge of those which are to come.

The argument drawn from the *universality of the belief of Prescience* ought to have been modified by the author. I would then have conceded to the propriety of this argument, so far as it would be entitled to weight: but I cannot allow that the belief of *Prescience*, founded on matters of little moment, is general. So far is the fact from this, that christians will not allow *Prescience*, except when it regards matters of the greatest consequence, and many reject the opinion that it has taken place since the time of the Apostles.

I will now attend to the particular instances, adduced, by SPINOZA, to prove the truth of his position.

The conduct of "Prince Louis Ferdinand" must, after attending to the circumstances, be considered as perfectly natural. He knew he was going into the field of battle, and that his post was one of peculiar danger, as he was to march at the head of troops, which though much inferior to their enemies in number, were determined to oppose to the last. Was it then strange that he should fear his death, and should desire from affection for his friends, to give his estate to them, by will, that it might be amicably settled?

The predictions in the scriptures are not of the same nature with those of the other nations, which were mentioned in the first piece of SPINOZA. This distinction ought to be made between them; that those in the scriptures were directed to be written by the spirit of God, while those of other nations were founded upon the flight of birds, or the ap-

pearance of the entrails of animals.

As I am unacquainted with the instance of Vettius Valens, I shall make but few remarks upon it.—The probability is that among the large numbers who prophesied about that time, this person happened to guess that the Roman empire would fall at a period not widely different from the time when it actually fell.

If Seneca had the least idea of the spherical form of the earth, the conclusion was natural that there must be something, on the other side of the sphere, of the same specific gravity, with the earth on which he lived, in order that the several parts might balance each other. If this were not the case, is it not probable that a person, of Seneca's discernment, would suppose that the little part which was then known, was but trifling in extent when compared with that which was created. We may as well call Columbus' belief a prophecy, as this, for he predicted the discovery, before he actually made it.

But SPINOZA thinks that these predictions are expressed "in terms more clear and unequivocal than those in which most of the prophecies of scripture are expressed." Are the predictions of Christ's birth, life, silence before his accusers, death, resurrection, &c. no plainer than this of Seneca, which is so perfectly indefinite? Can this be compared with Christ's prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, his betrayers, and the manner of his death? Isaiah predicted of Christ that his visage was to be marred; that he was to be rejected of men; to be bruised for our iniquities; to be brought as a lamb to the slaughter; to be

taken from prison and from judgment ; to make his grave with the wicked, and the rich in his death ; and to be numbered with the transgressors." These circumstances are not selected as being the most particular of any in the Bible, but as being much more so than the prediction of Seneca. Had he given a description of the country ; had he mentioned the time of the discovery ; the latitude and longitude, there would then have been some reason to believe it to be an act of *Prescience* ; but with all these circumstances, it will be far from being more particular than most of the predictions contained in the scriptures.

Like Bonaparte, Sir Sidney Smith was ambitious, but should we have believed Bonaparte, to have prophesied, if he had declared twelve years since, that he should subjugate Prussia by this time. It was a plan, which, without any unnatural circumstances, was executed ; nor can we look upon it so strange, as that Napoleon should have been prospered as he has been for a number of years.

Of WELTON it may be said, he saw himself a sinner. Thoughtfulness enabled him to draw aside the curtain which shut futurity from his view, and seeing that he had no claim to the joys which were there offered, he became gloomy, which made the prospect appear still darker. Hence the inference was natural, that he should shortly return to his original dust. To him, death appeared to be "the wages of sin," and although his behaviour was such as merited the esteem of man, yet he was sensible that "God does not see as man seeth."

I will not, however, be positive that there has been no *Prescience*

since the days of the Apostles. But if there has been any, it must have been the work of God ; and to suppose that he will interfere, by his spirit, in the trifling concerns of life, is, I conceive, to detract from the dignity of his character. CLARK.

On the Profession of Law.

No. VII.

IT is next objected to lawyers, and with great plausibility, as it appears to many, that their compensation is immoderate and oppressive, and that therefore the profession ought not to be encouraged. It might be sufficient here to remark, that all compensation for services is merely comparative ; that probably no man would contend that every service should be remunerated according to the same standard, taking into consideration the time only, consumed in rendering it ; thus the President of the United States and a journeyman mechanic, an ambassador and a supercargo of a fishing vessel, an admiral and a cook's waiter, should receive the same stipend ; and that all services will in the ordinary way, be valued according to their importance, and the difficulty of performing them. I will not, however, dismiss this objection without observing, that lawyers and other professional men, are put to a very considerable expence in procuring an education, that many of the best years of their lives are devoted to fitting themselves for business, before the least emolument is received, and that after this succeeds a period of probation which commonly brings little profit, with much discouragement and anxiety. If they survive these days of apprehension

and perplexity, where is the injustice of permitting them to reap a harvest from the field, every part of which has been the scene of their reiterated labors? The operations of the mind offer quite a different claim to reward from that presented by bodily exertion. This difference is always seen and almost always recognized. The mind must have time to prepare, or it performs nothing; while the common operations of the body are simple, mechanical, and within the power of all men. Nor is it unimportant to my purpose, that the compensation given to lawyers is voluntary, and is, or may be, known to him who gives it. Surely there can be little danger of oppression and extortion when the employment is voluntary, where there are many competitors for the same business, and where the person employing may always know the terms of professional assistance.

It is said, with an air of great triumph, that lawyers promote litigation, which, when carried to excess, is one of the sorest evils experienced in society. If by litigation is intended the power of prosecuting claims, and obtaining decisions in courts of justice, no doubt the objection is well founded, for I have endeavored to prove, in a former number, that without lawyers this power could never exist. In any other sense, so far are the honorable and respectable members of the profession from encouraging litigation, that they will be found to have allayed the ardor of clients, and quelled their impetuosity, in ten instances to one in which they have inflamed and irritated the minds of the contending parties. There are persons, indeed, who make it their business to promote

law suits, and whom our language has designated by the disgraceful name of pettifoggers. These are the race whom Edmund Burke calls "the fomenters and conductors of the petty war of village vexation." These characters are hateful and hated. No honest man will make an effort to rescue them from the contempt and detestation with which these are overwhelmed, and which they so justly deserve.

Some men take pleasure in affirming, that lawyers, when called to legislate, disguise the subject by a studied ambiguity, that by creating doubts they may procure employment. As this assertion appears absolutely unsupported by the least particle of evidence, it may well be dismissed as a groundless and malicious insinuation. Let the statutes framed by lawyers be compared with those botched up by men of other professions, and let the charge of ambiguity fall where it belongs.

The only remaining objections which occur as worthy of consideration, are, the vast number of laws and their uncertainty. It will be observed that these objections refer to the *laws*; in order, therefore, that my opponents may derive any benefit from them, it is necessary they should prove that without lawyers the laws would be more simple and less uncertain. As to simplicity, the laws of the Mohawks, or Cherokees, no doubt possess this attribute in a great degree, but to provide for all possible certainty in a legal code, the wisdom of the world has never found any expedient comparable to that of having a learned and reputable body of men devoted to the study of the laws.

As to the number of laws, I will venture to assert that by no human wisdom could it be materially lessened, without greatly injuring the dependence and consistency of the whole. The truth is, those who think few laws to be necessary, think so because they see few objects which to their minds appear worthy of legal provision. The mistake arises from their ignorance and from nothing else. To recapitulate only the great branches of law would exceed the bounds of this essay. Let him who is at a loss for a reason why the laws should be numerous, consider the various conveyances, whether written or not, by which a right is acquired to landed property, with the various interpretations of all the operative words in the different conveyances; let him reflect upon all the different rights of ownership according to the title by which the property is holden, the various injuries which may be offered to those rights, and the multiplied remedies which are necessary to give redress in case the rights are assailed. When he has exhausted this immense store of study and contemplation, he will begin to entertain more just views of the illimitable variety of subjects for legal decision. Perhaps no head of law is more simple than that of marine insurance. It is comparatively of modern date, and has grown up under the auspices of several men of great and liberal minds. Yet how many questions must be decided on what things are proper subjects of insurance, what interest is necessary in the insured, what is a lawful voyage, what are the perils insured against, what is the meaning of the policy, what the force of a warranty, or representation,

what the effect of a concealment, what is required as to the seaworthiness of the vessel, what is a deviation and its effect, what is a loss within the meaning of the policy, and a great many other important points on which an immense mass of property constantly depends? COKE.

[To be continued.]

MESSRS EDITORS,

Conceiving a discussion of the following subject not inapplicable to the design of the Literary Cabinet, I send it for publication, if you judge proper.

On the Immortality of the Soul.

IT is not my design in these remarks to discuss the question, whether the immortality of the soul can be proved from the light of nature. A satisfactory answer to such a question can be given only by a recurrence to facts. I wish only to call the attention of the readers of the Cabinet to a few of the arguments which exist; leaving them to determine for themselves, whether they are sufficient to demonstrate the future eternal existence of the soul, or whether they leave the inquiring mind in darkness.

If it can be rendered probable that men will exist after the dissolution of the body, it will doubtless be generally considered that they will forever exist, since the great difficulty with most enquirers has been to conceive of animate, rational existence, after the present life.

Arguments to prove that death will not close our existence, must therefore be in point.

The *immateriality* of the soul, if it can be established, will go far towards proving that it is immortal. If there is any part of human beings which is immaterial, it will be allowed universally that

it is the thinking, rational part, or the soul: and it will probably be agreed that if the creation of an immaterial thinking substance be possible, the soul, since its properties are so perfectly different from every thing which is known to be predicable of matter, must be that substance. We have no evidence that the creation of such a substance is not possible; but something in favor of it. Any thing may be created which does not imply a contradiction, malevolence or imperfection in the Deity. The creation of a cogitative substance will not be supposed to imply malevolence or imperfection: nor does it imply a contradiction.

All that can be said by those who deny its possibility, is that we can have no conceptions of such a thing as an immaterial substance. That any thing is beyond our conceptions, furnishes no evidence that its existence is not possible. For aught that we are able to determine to the contrary, a thing may exist, of which with our present faculties, we can form no idea. From our own ignorance, we have no evidence that beings having other capacities, may not have clear conceptions of an immaterial substance. Our want of conception of such a substance, may arise wholly from the scantiness of our powers.—Should it be admitted that nothing can exist which cannot be conceived of, it might be easy to disprove the existence of many things, of whose existence, most men with their present faculties, have the fullest evidence. A blind man might easily prove beyond the possibility of a doubt, that there is no such thing as color; a deaf man, that the idea of sound is absurd, and a man void

of nerves, that material substances have no solidity.

To prove that the creation of an immaterial substance is a contradiction, it must be shown that whatever is not matter, is nothing; i. e. that we can have no conception of any thing but of matter. But this is only saying that which, as has been before shown, affords no proof that such a thing as an immaterial substance is impossible. For aught we know, therefore, God *may* create an immaterial substance.

If this be *possible*, may it not be supposed that the *human soul* is immaterial? Many of the properties of matter are known to us. None, that have ever been discovered by man, bear the least affinity to the properties of the soul. Matter in its highest state of perfection approaches no nearer to the acts of thinking and consciousness, than in its roughest state. After its utmost refinement, it still appears to possess the same sluggish, inactive properties which it possessed before. Nothing which at all resembles the acts of the mind has ever been discovered in it. Different modifications of matter can never alter its nature. It will still remain *matter*, and possess the same properties which are ever attached to material substances. Besides, thought is indivisible.—But matter is capable of inconceivable and perhaps endless divisions. Every particle possesses all that is essential to matter.—Instead of an indivisible thing, therefore, thought must be made up of an inconceivable number of distinct consciousnesses.

Nor can the mere *motion* of matter produce thought. Thought is neither motion nor matter; nor does it resemble either. All the

varieties of motion are doubtless exhibited in the natural world, and yet not one has ever been known to produce any thing resembling the acts of the mind. We may therefore conclude that the soul is an immaterial substance.

The *immateriality* of the soul goes far towards proving that it is immortal. This does not indeed show that it cannot be annihilated by the Divine Being: but it proves that it cannot be destroyed in the same manner in which the body and other material substances are destroyed. Material bodies are composed of parts, and are destroyed by the decomposition or separation of those parts. Thus the body is destroyed by being converted into dust. But the soul, if it be immaterial, is not composed of parts, and cannot therefore be separated. If it be destroyed it must be annihilated. But we have never had an instance of the annihilation of any substance, which was ever created. Matter has a natural and established tendency to corruption: but the soul being wholly different from matter, seems to be calculated for continuance. We have therefore at least, some reason to conclude from the immateriality of the soul, that it will not perish with the body. PLATO.

[To be continued.]

Human Prescience.

"No one, in his *right senses*, is seized with the spirit of divination."

PLATO'S *TIMÆUS*.

IT is the belief of most men, that *Human Prescience* is the result of an immediate communication from the Deity. On the correctness of this opinion, I shall not at present, make any remarks. But we are presented with a rea-

son for it, the strangeness of which is so well calculated to arrest the attention, and which exhibits the human mind in so curious and interesting a point of view, that I shall be excused for making it the subject of this number. What I allude to is contained in the following passage from an old English writer, whose name I do not know. "Let the outward actions of a *prophet* be as extravagant as those of fools and *madmen*, yet even these do directly tend to the reverence of God, by impressing the *greater certainty of a spirit's agency*."

This writer is not the only man who supposes *madness to be a proof of inspiration*.

The modern inhabitants of christian countries are not accustomed to believe, that the "spirit of prophecy" is communicated to man at all, in this enlightened age. It cannot be said, therefore, that they *do* pronounce a man inspired, when he exhibits symptoms of distraction. But it may fairly be inferred from one consideration, that they *would*, if their creed did not tell them there is no inspiration. No violence is done to probability in believing that those men, who consider throes and convulsions, groans and foam, and incoherent ejaculations, as proofs of divine influence, would, in other circumstances, consider them as evidence of a *prophetic spirit*.

If we turn our attention to ancient, or, which is equivalent, to superstitious times, we shall find abundant testimonies to the fact, that the *ravings of madness* were very generally viewed as infallible *proof of the "present God"*. The sweet son of MARG furnishes us with the following picture of a *frantic propheteas*.

....."Impatient in her grot
 APOLLO's swelling priestess *wildly*
raves,
 Reluctant, lab'ring from her breast to
 heave
 Th' incumbent GOD: so much the
 more he curbs
 Her *foamy mouth*, subdues her *mad-*
ding heart,
 And pressing forms her."

The Pythian Priestess, in the
 temple of Delphi, delivered her
 oracles, with *eyes sparkling, hair*
standing on end, gnashing with the
teeth, foaming, yelling, shivering.

It is well known to be the no-
 tion of the Mahometan and East-
 ern nations, that *madmen are in-*
spired. Mahomet was not want-
 ing in sagacity, when he urged

the agitations of epileptic fits as
 proof of communication from
 God.

The Jews, whose country was
 the "native soil of the prophets,"
 believed an inflamed imagination
 and a degree of *madness* (to ex-
 press myself in the most mode-
 rate terms) to be proper disposi-
 tions for intercourse with Heaven.

SPINOZA.

[To be continued.]

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We cannot insert translations or im-
 itations of Anacreon, that poet being
 already too well known.

A translation of Gray's Latin Ode
 in the album of the Grande Chartre-
 use, would be acceptable.

The Bower.

.....Sometimes
 We bid bright Fiction to resemble Truth,
 And sometimes speak what Truth herself approves.

HES. THEOG.

To the Editors of the CABINET.

I WAS much puzzled, I confess,
 The Riddle in your last to guess,
 But when my mind I closely bent,
 I found a *Bell* was all you meant.
 Hated and fear'd, yet lov'd by all
 Who are subjected to its call:
 Hated when in the morn we rise,
 When half awake we rub our eyes,
 And hear the sound, and dozing dread
 Alike to keep or quit the bed:
 Fear'd when our pastime we pursue,
 Our worn-out senses to renew,
 With joy we trip it o'er the ground,
 And nimbly kick the foot-ball round;
 Yet from the time we first begin,
 We fear the *bell* will call us in.
 But when we anxious wait its call
 To invite us to the dining hall,
 'Tis then with love its sounds we hear,
 'Tis then they're grateful to the ear.
 What pen is adequate to tell
 The music of the *breakfast bell*,
 Or when for *supper* it doth ring,
 Who can its praises justly sing!
 Not so the "tinkling cymbals" please
 The clust'ring throngs of swarming
 bees,
 Nor sound of coin so blest appears

To watchful miser's listening ears—
 These sounds extinguish all our hate,
 And for our fear will compensate.

JUVENILIS YALENSIS.

TO CHARLOTTE.

When Charlotte rises with the dawn-
 ing light,
 She steals from blushing morn her ro-
 ses bright;
 But when she sleeps till after nine or
 ten,
 Aurora slily steals them back again.

CHARADE.

TO desolate the country wide
 My first is oft employ'd;
 And while it shoots its deadly shafts,
 No peace can be enjoyed.
 In former times, my second us'd
 The female form to grace;
 But in these days a bag is found,
 Which holds all but the face.
 My whole to savage ears alone,
 Can pleasing music yield,
 And when its heard he marches on,
 And boldly takes the field.

E. L. W.